THE WORLD.

NUMBER CLIX.

By *ADAM FITZ-ADAM.*

To be continued every THURSDAY.

THURSDAY, *January* the 15th, 1756.

OLD as I am, my curioſity carried me the other night to ſee the new dramatic ſatire, called The Apprentice, which, conſidering the preſent epidemic madneſs for theatrical employments raging through the lower ranks of people, will I hope be as ſerviceable to cure the Engliſh mob of that idle diſorder, as the immortal work of Cervantes was to exorciſe from the breaſts of the Spaniſh nobility the demon of knight-errantry. The piece is new and entertaining, and has received no inconſiderable advantages from the maſterly performance

performance of a principal comedian, who, with a true genius for the ſtage, has very naturally repreſented the contemptible inſufficiency of a pert pretenſion to it. At my return to my lodgings, I found the following letter on my table.

To Mr. Fitz-Adam.

Sir,

Among the many benevolent deſigns which have adorned the preſent well-diſpoſed age, I remember to have read one a few years ago, in a periodical pamphlet, entitled, "A propoſal for building an hoſpital "for *decayed authors*," which gave me, and many other charitable people, much ſatisfaction. If the aged, the lame and the blind are proper objects of compaſſion, how much more ſo are thoſe, who (if I may uſe the expreſſion) have mutilated their underſtandings by an application to an art, which incapacitates it's profeſſors for all other purſuits! How many ſublime genius's have we daily ſeen, who, ſcorning the mechanic drudgeries, to which they have been deſtined by their muck-worm parents, have ſo feaſted their minds with Pierian delicacies, as to leave their bodies to periſh through nakedneſs and hunger!

Having heard that the author of that eſſay made an impreſſion not only upon thoſe who ſhed often the tears of pity, but even upon uſurers, attorneys and ſober tradeſmen, I have ventured, by the conveyance of your paper, to lay my thoughts before the public, in compaſſion to the diſtreſſes of another order of men, who, in a ſubordinate degree, are connected with the ſublime race of authors, and, as retainers to the muſes, claim mine and your aſſiſtance. The perſons I mean are ſuch

as,

as, either from the want of ambition or capacity, are prevented from ſoaring high enough to oblige mankind with their own conceptions, and yet having a taſte or inclination above handling a yard, or engroſſing parchment, entertain and inſtruct the reſt of their ſpecies by retailing the thoughts of others, and animating their own carcaſſes with the ever-living ſentiments of heroes, heroines, wits and legiſlators. Theſe gentlemen and ladies, whilſt they are reſident in London, are called in plain Engliſh, ACTORS; but when they condeſcend to exhibit their illuſtrious perſonages in the country, the common people diſtinguiſh them by the name of STAGE-PLAYERS, the rural gentry by the uncivil appellation of STROLLERS, and a more unmannerly act of parliament by the names of VAGRANTS and VAGABONDS. Such, ſir, is the preſent ill-bred dialect of our common ſtatute law.

I MUST confeſs it has grieved me not a little, when I have beheld a theatrical veteran, who has ſerved all the campaigns of Alexander, Julius Cæſar, and Henry the fifth, caſt off by cruel fate, or the caprice of a manager, and condemned (in the tragic words of a celebrated poet)

to beg his bitter bread
Through realms his valour ſav'd:

but judge, Mr. Fitz-Adam, what muſt have been my anxiety, when I have heard that a truly chriſtian actor (which is no ſmall miracle in our days) who has inoffenſively trod the ſtage many years without ever moleſting our paſſions, or breaking the commandment by repreſenting *the likeneſs of any thing upon the earth*, ſhould be diſcarded merely on account of this his quiet deportment, and ſent to eat the unmuſe-like bread of induſtry, behind

behind the entrenchment of a counter! Shall a man, born with a ſoul aſpiring to imitate the rapine of a Bajazet, or a woman with a heart burning to emulate the whoredoms of a Cleopatra, be ſent, the one to weigh out ſugar and ſpices to dirty mechanics, and the other to be cruelly fettered in the bonds of matrimony, among a phlegmatic race of creatures, where chaſtity is reckoned a virtue? Indeed, ſir, when you come ſeriouſly to think of theſe things, I dare ſay you will lament with me, that in all this hoſpital-erecting town there is no charitable aſylum yet founded for theſe unfortunate repreſentatives of the greateſt perſonages that ever trod the ſtage of earth.

We are told by Hamlet, that it is not impoſſible to trace Alexander's carcaſe, after his world-conquering ſpirit had left it, to the ſtopping of a bung-hole: but methinks it would not be decent for ſo civilized a nation as our own, to ſuffer any *living* hero to be ſo reduced by fortune, as to ſtop that place, which the *dead* Macedonian monarch was ſuppoſed to perform the office of clay to. In plain Engliſh, would it not be ſhocking to ſee a fine perriwig-pated emperor, whom we have beheld aſcend the capital as Julius Cæſar, degraded to fill ſmall-beer barrels at Hockley in the hole?

To what baſe uſes may we turn?

But that ſuch heart-breaking anticipations may not weigh upon the ſpirits of theſe theatrical genius's, while they are bringing the ſtately perſonages of antiquity before our eyes; and that our Pyrrhuſſes, Tamerlanes and Marc Antonies, even though itinerant, may not ſneak into the ſheepiſh look of taylor's, by foreboding that the cruel lot of fate may ere long deſtine thoſe legs, which are now adorned with the regal buſkin, to croſs one another

nother again upon an obſcure ſhop-board in a garret; I ſay, that we may drive miſery from the minds of theſe worthies, when ſhe puts on ſuch horrid ſhapes, I would propoſe to the nobility and gentry of this metropolis a ſubſcription for raiſing an hoſpital for decayed actors and actreſſes, that our performers may conſtantly be cheriſhed with the aſſurance that meagre want ſhall never grin at their royal heels, and that whenever age, accident or the caprice of the town deprives thoſe of their heroic callings, who fortunately have eſcaped violent deaths (for theſe repreſentatives of heroes are ſometimes known to imitate their originals, and as the poet ſings,

——————*ere nature bids them die,*

Fate takes them early to the pitying ſky)

they will be ſupported whilſt alive, and, *when the fiſters three ſhall ſlit the fatal thread*, they may be enabled to make an exit as they have lived, in mimetic grandeur, and have the inſignia of their honours carried before them *to the grave's lightleſs manſion.*

If I find the generality of your readers are enclined to encourage this uſeful charity, I will take the liberty to offer to them a plan for the building ſuch an hoſpital, a ſcheme for the raiſing a fund for it's ſupport, to point out what qualifications are neceſſary to entitle a candidate to a place in it, and laſt of all, to recapitulate the many advantages that muſt neceſſarily be derived to ſociety from ſo laudable an undertaking.

But that no well diſpoſed perſons may be influenced by the uncharitable inſinuation that I have ſome ſelfiſh views in the erecting this hoſpital, I think it abſolutely neceſſary to declare, that I am neither an unemployed phyſician, an unpractiſed ſurgeon, nor a drugleſs apothecary; nor do I any other way expect either emolument

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